

Based on 2025-2026 solicitation!
The 2026-2027 solicitation has not yet been released.
Some of the specifics are subject to change!!!



Department of War (DoW) Cyber Service Academy (CSA)

Proposal Review and Key Components

<https://www.augusta.edu/ccs/dod-cyber-scholarship.php>

**formerly known as DoD Cyber Scholarship Program (CySP)

Designated as a Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD) and Cyber Operations (CAE-CO)



AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF COMPUTER
AND CYBER SCIENCES

Designated CAE-CD
since 2016

Designated CAE-CO
since 2024



Review of Cyber Service Academy

- **Overarching Goal/Objective:** To increase the number of qualified students entering the fields of information assurance, information technology, and cybersecurity to meet the DoW's increasing dependence on cybersecurity for war fighting and the security of its information infrastructure.

Student Scholarship(s)

Eligibility Criterion:

- Must be 18 years of age or older.
- Must be a citizen of the United States. Note, if family members are not U.S. Citizens, some DoW Agencies may be unable to process the applicant (student) to the security clearance level required. Every effort will be made to assign eligible students at an Agency without such restrictions.
- Must be enrolled (or accepted for enrollment) in one of the identified CAE colleges or universities listed in the announcement, or enrolled (or accepted for enrollment) at an institution selected by a CAE as a collaborative partner for these purposes.
- Must have completed (or by August 2026 will have completed) at a minimum the first two years of an undergraduate degree program and be eligible to (a) begin either the third or fourth year of an undergraduate degree program; (b) begin the first or second year of a Master's degree program; or (c) pursue doctoral studies
- Must be pursuing a course of study and/or have a declared major in one of the scientific, technical, or managerial disciplines related to cybersecurity or with a concentration in cyber security.

Ineligibility Criterion:

- Current DoW/Federal Employees, and Active Duty Military must apply through a separate, different application process that goes through their current Component. → Retention scholarship
- Employees of non-DoW federal agencies are ineligible for either program (recruitment or retention).
- Students with an existing service obligation are not eligible to apply. (Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) participants are eligible to apply as long as they do not currently have a service obligation with their ROTC activities.)
- Except for small achievement awards, students may not accept simultaneous remuneration from another scholarship or fellowship **exceeding \$6,000** in any academic year. **If you are currently receiving financial aid, we will need to consult with you individually in determining the applicability of this requirement.**

CSA Timeline

- Recommended Timeline:
 - Launch webpage with info and application now
 - Host student information sessions TBD
 - Student online application due date **2/17/2026, noon**
 - AU DoW CSA application submission 3/20/2026
 - DoW “Football Draft” Late April 2026
 - Announcement of DoW CSA recipients 5/1/2026 (tentative)

Online student application link:

<https://www.cyberworkforce.mil/DoW-Cyber-Service-Academy/>

DoW CSA Benefits

Students selected as CSA Scholars will receive:

- Full cost of tuition and required fees
- Book and computer allowance (only covers required class textbooks, not books which are listed as optional for class)
- Stipend for room and board: \$29,000 for undergraduate students and \$34,000 for graduate students (Master's/PhD).
- There are NO allowances for dependents.

Requirements

- Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress will constitute grounds for termination of financial assistance and termination of internship and/or employment appointment.
- Students who fail to complete the degree program satisfactorily or to fulfill the service commitment upon graduation shall be required to reimburse the United States, in whole or in part, the cost of the financial (scholarship) assistance provided to them.

Student Obligation

- Students selected to participate in the DoW CSA will be required to sign a written agreement obligating them to work for the DoW as a civilian employee for one calendar year for each year of scholarship assistance.
- If a student applies for only one semester (or six months) of scholarship, the student must still agree to work for the DoW for one year. This agreement is provided to the selecting agency for their records to ensure compliance with the service commitment.
- Note: New applicants must have at least one year of school left to apply. Students applying in January 2026 cannot be scheduled to graduate earlier than May 2027.

(academic year Fall 2026, Spring 2027)

Student Obligation continued...

- Students may also payback the scholarship through military service. Individuals choosing to enlist or accept a commission to serve on active duty in one of the Military Services shall incur a service obligation of a minimum of 4 years on active duty in that Service upon graduation.
- The Military Services may establish a service obligation longer than 4 years, depending on the occupational specialty and type of enlistment or commissioning program selected.

Student Obligation continued...

- Students will also be required to serve in internship positions, if timing permits, with a designated DoW organization during the time they are receiving scholarship support until they complete the course of study provided for by the scholarship.
- These internships will be arranged by the DoW to occur during the summer or other breaks between school terms, as appropriate to the individual's circumstances and the institution's calendar.
- The internship does not count toward satisfying the period of obligated service incurred by accepting the Cybersecurity scholarship.

Student Obligation continued...

- Students will be required to complete a security investigation questionnaire to initiate the process for a background investigation in preparation for their internships, if applicable, and as a condition of future employment with the DoW.

<https://www.dcsa.mil/Personnel-Vetting/Adjudications/FAQS-Adjudication-and-Vetting-Services-AVS/>

- Drug tests or other suitability processing will occur as appropriate.
- Students will also be required to sign an agreement stating that they will accept assignments requiring travel or change of duty stations as interns or employees.

Student Obligation continued...

- Individuals who voluntarily terminate employment during intern appointments or before the end of the period of obligated service required by the terms of Chapter 112, title 10, United States Code, will be required to refund the United States, in whole or in part, the cost of the educational assistance provided to them.

Student Obligation continued...

- Students will be required to formally accept or decline the scholarship within 15 days of notification.
- Non-acceptance by this date will mean the scholarship will be offered to the next available student.

Students should consider the following when applying: (These items will not disqualify them from applying)

- Am I willing to move away from family/home town? (Summer Internship and/or Final Placement)
- Am I willing to move my family to a new city/state? (Summer Internship and/or Final Placement)
- Am I willing to quit a current non-Federal job to accept the scholarship?
- Is there a life event happening in the next few months that will prevent me from performing my service obligation (Marriage, birth, etc)?
- Salary levels may not be the same as what I am currently making or what I could potentially make working for a contractor. I should factor in salary, benefits, and the fact that I don't have to pay large student loan when making my decision.

Candidates who are applying for DoW CSA should understand up front that they could probably make more on the outside. Before a candidate signs the application form they should be informed that they could potentially receive a lesser salary than their peers headed to commercial jobs. What a DoD CySP hire will get from the U.S. Government service is the knowledge they are joining a team with an important mission: defending our nation. Along the way the U.S. Government is going to give them a scholarship that allows them to leave school relatively debt free. They will get a clearance, a top-notch advanced training (with certification), and the satisfaction of having served their country. Our previous Cyber Operators are on missions worldwide now and they are making a difference everyday against Advanced Persistent Threats.

Key Components of the Student Application

- **NEW Recruitment Applications**: The temporary recruitment student application utilizes a Microsoft Form and will be processed in **two parts**. There is no log-in or creating an account.
- New Applicants will be encouraged to dedicate enough time to answer both parts in one sitting.
- Part 1 will ask the student to identify to email address: a personal address (.com or non-.edu address) as well as a .edu email address.
- Part 2 will ask the student to enter the same personal email address they used in Part 1.
- This will allow our form to associate both parts with the same student. To make this as painless for everyone (Applicant, Faculty Members, Agency Reps, DoW CSA Program Office) the following changes have been implemented:

<https://www.cyber.mil/dod-workforce-innovation-directorate/csa>

Key Components of the Student Application

- **Unofficial Transcripts:** Applicants will submit unofficial transcripts to the DoW CSA Program Office directly.
 - Due date: 12:00 PM (noon) EST on 17 February 2026.
 - Email Subject Line Format: *Applicant Full Name – Institution Name – Unofficial Transcripts*
 - Email Address: osd.mc-alex.dod-cio.mbx.dod-csa@mail.mil
- **One (1) Letter of Recommendation:** Must be sent directly to the DoW CSA Program Office by the author not the applicant. The letter should come from a current or most recent faculty member or supervisor who can speak to your potential for academic success and your cyber-knowledge and ability. The applicant is responsible for contacting the author and ensuring the letter is sent by the deadline. Letters sent by the applicant will not be accepted.
 - Due Date: 12:00 PM (noon) EST on 17 February 2026.
 - Email Subject Line Format: *Applicant Full Name – Institution Name – Letter of Recommendation*
 - Email Address: osd.mc-alex.dod-cio.mbx.dod-csa@mail.mil
- **Competitions / Cyber Exercises / Capture-the-Flag Documentation:** Applicants will submit any cyber competition data directly to the DoW CSA Program Office via email.
 - Due Date: 12:00 PM (noon) EST on 17 February 2026.
 - Email Subject Line Format: *Applicant Full Name – Institution Name – Competition Documentation*
 - Email Address: osd.mc-alex.dod-cio.mbx.dod-csa@mail.mil

OF612 Supplemental Competency Statement

- Evaluate each applicant on the following competencies (KSA's)
 - Knowledge of the techniques of the cybersecurity discipline, including encryption, access control, physical security, training, threat analysis, and authentication.
 - Knowledge of the human factors in cybersecurity, including human computer interaction, design, training, sabotage, human error prevention and identification, personal use policies, and monitoring.
 - Ability to identify and analyze problems, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical decisions, and provide solutions to individual and organizational problems.
 - Ability to consider and respond appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful, compassionate and sensitive, and treats others with respect.
 - Ability to make clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals or groups; listens effectively and clarifies information as needed; facilitates an open exchange of ideas and fosters an atmosphere of open communication.
 - Ability to express facts and ideas in writing in clear, convincing and organized manners appropriate to the audience and occasion.

CAE Responsibilities

- CAE Endorsement. CAEs shall assess each of the competencies using a 5-point scale for each applicant:
 1. No knowledge or Ability
 2. Basic Knowledge or Ability
 3. Intermediate Knowledge or Ability
 4. Advanced Knowledge or Ability
 5. Superior Knowledge or Ability
- CAE Endorsement. CAEs shall indicate only one of the following three levels of endorsement for each applicant:
 - a. Not Recommended
 - b. Recommended
 - c. Highly Recommended
- CAE's must submit all applications, including those not recommended in the submission.
- CAEs will be responsible for monitoring student progress and will notify the DoW CSA Program Manager should any student scholar fail to attain minimum academic standards required for continuing scholarship support.



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